

# **PROJECT PROPOSAL: A TRANSNATIONAL CLUSTER FOR ACTIVE AGING**

## **Background**

The Nordic and Baltic countries are all small and tackling with similar challenges:

- keeping the aging population as healthy as possible and
- finding new ways of improving the quality of life of aging population through innovations in numerous service areas

These countries have research resources for identifying the differing needs of the aging population, and emerging technologies to be utilized to meet these needs by means of active technological and service development. Northern Europe is well known for good publicly funded services. There is high proven innovation capability, but the home markets are small. The present trends in economy and globalization are calling for more cooperation and less overlapping activities in the field of innovation.

## **Purpose and overall objectives**

A transnational cluster of service innovation for aging population is needed in fields of healthcare, wellness and assistive technologies to keep the aging population an active part of the society and to increase competitiveness of cluster area. This project is about the groundwork and establishing the cluster initiative for Baltic Sea Region partner countries.

Projects objectives

1. to transfer knowledge and create a broader open innovation platform for supporting active aging
2. to provide a larger home market for companies within the cluster area
3. to build a strong mutual springboard for accessing global markets

## **Roadmap**

1. The cluster start-up begins with a facts-finding / benchmarking trip to Singapore, scheduled for early autumn
  - a. project participants will also get to know each other, working around a common theme
  - b. learn more about Asian market's needs and active aging in Asia where the number of persons over 60 years is projected to more than double from 322 million in 2000 to about 705 million in 2025
  - c. agree on preparatory work on focus areas for the next phase
2. After the trip a clustering meeting will take place in the Baltic Sea Region. This workshop will prepare the cluster initiative with a financing model as well as decide on the next steps and responsible parties to launch the cluster.

## **Investment and financing**

Participating in the cluster initiation project requires approximately a 10-day workload / organisation (estimated costs at roughly 3.500 e for wages, employer's charges and overheads). Travel, accommodation and program costs of the facts-finding trip to Singapore are appr. 4.500 e / person and to the workshop meeting in the Baltic Sea Region appr. 1.000 e / person. This estimate counts to a total cost of 9.000 e / person per organization.

Culminatum Innovation is applying for a Nordic Innovation Centre financing for this cluster initiation. NIC financing is planned to cover 50% of each partner's costs. Partners are thus required to invest the other half, but may also use in-kind contribution (working hours) to cover their own contribution. The initiation project is capable to cover the costs of one person from a participating country. Additional persons' costs would have to be covered 100% by participating organisation(s) in the same country. Of course additional financing would allow more – do you have any suggestions for this?

However, the project is also able cover the program costs of the Singapore trip for a limited number of key persons from other organisations interested in preparing the cluster. This covered cost is 2.500 e / person inclusive of meeting arrangements, local transportation and meals for 3 days, leaving then the flights and hotels (est. 2.000 e) to be covered by organizations themselves.

Private companies are encouraged and welcome to join, at their own cost.

## **Background on Active Aging in Singapore**

Singapore is one of the fastest ageing populations in Asia. The proportion of Singapore residents aged 65 and above is projected to increase from 8.6% in 2008 to 18.7% in 2030. Singapore government has recommended policies to encourage the development of the elderly industry. It intends to develop Singapore as a thriving business and research center on ageing. The industry will grow rapidly when Asia's ageing population reaches a critical mass. Future seniors will become a key consumer group, demanding more products and services catering to their age-specific needs. Government has made special resources available to enhance development of this sector.

The facts-finding trip enables participants to see and understand the issues and challenges facing Singapore, as well as other Asian countries in general, thus creating new business opportunities. Singapore is also positioning itself as a research center on ageing, where Nordic and Baltic companies can conduct R&D activities catering the whole Asian market.

Program organizers in Singapore will prepare a well researched visiting itinerary to enable participants to fully understand the implications of this ageing population and the opportunities it offers for Nordic and Baltic organizations. Overviews on the situations in Japan, Korea, China and Thailand have been requested upfront. The following program will be revised accordingly and will be subject to minor changes due to availability of relevant parties.

## **Proposed schedule and program for the trip to Singapore**

Day 1. August 31.

Departing flights

Day 2. September 1.

Arrive in Singapore

Day 3. September 2.

- i. Courtesy call on Ambassador
- ii. Courtesy call on Minister (Prime Minister's office) in charge of elderly issues, details on promotion of Singapore as a business and research center on aging
- iii. Discussions with officials from the Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports on elderly issues and challenges and government's approach to these challenges.
- iv. Visit to Health Promotion Board to discuss elderly health issues.
- v. Visit to the Ministry of Health – medical issues in an aging population.
- vi. Reception by Ambassador.

Day 4. September 3.

- i. Visit to Spring Singapore – Business opportunities in aging population.
- ii. Visit to Council for 3rd Age for discussions on promotion of active aging to have better quality of life for elderly.
- iii. Visit to Peoples Association – Programmes and physical activities for an aging population, visit to private companies dealing in elderly business to better understand the challenges of marketing new products to the industry.

Day 5. September 4.

- i. Visit to nursing homes – private and public to better understand the needs and how new assistive technologies and solution can provide better quality of care.
  - ii. Conclusions and learnings of the facts finding trip and further follow up actions.
- Departure.

Day 6. September 5.

Arrival in Europe